n. A Clause 3.2.7 has been added to the effect that Projects in OECD countries will get a weightage of 50% as compared to projects in developing countries.

o. The number of short-listed bidders has been increased to 6, and further increased to 7 in case of projects costing less than Rs.500 cr. or for repetitive projects (clause 3.5.2). Further, a provision for preparation of reserve list of bidders has been made for substitution of bidders in the event of their withdrawal or rejection (Clause 3.5.3). In so far as road projects are concerned, the existing exemption from short - listing of bidders would continue.

Subject to the above changes, the other provisions of OM dated 5.12.2007 shall continue to apply.

Strike by truck operators

1307. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Truck Operators again went on strike from first week of January, 2009 after a span of about six months;

(b) if so, the details of their demands and why the issue could not be settled before commencement of strike; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to ensure that such strikes are prevented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI MAHADEO S. KHANDELA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The transporters had raised demands on economic bailout package in the form of reduction in diesel prices, reduction in tyre prices, moratorium on instalments and waiver of interest on truck finance for six months, moratorium on toll for six months etc. Their other demands include seamless movement of all the vehicles without state/national permit and related taxes, abolition of service tax etc. In order to resolve the issues raised by the transporters prior to their strike from 5.1.09, meetings were held in the Ministry involving all the concerned Ministries such as M/o Petroleum & Natural Gas, M/o Commerce, M/o Finance (Deptt. of Revenue, Central Board of Direct Taxes, D/o Financial Services) on 2nd and 4th January 2009. The transporters were apprised of the action taken by the Government on each issue. Moreover some of the demands of the transporters required consultation with the States also. Despite this, the transporters were adamant to continue with their strike unless their demands were resolved immediately. The strike was withdrawn unconditionally by the transporters after persistent efforts by the Ministry and consequent upon the signing of an agreement between this Ministry & AIMTC on 12.1.09.

(c) It has been decided to constitute separate committees both at the State and Central level to provide a permanent mechanism to look into the grievances of the transporters on a fast track basis.